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Fact Sheet

Participation and Activity Limitation Survey 2006 Facts on Hearing Limitations



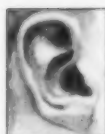
Social and Aboriginal Statistics Division
Jean Talon Building, 7th Floor, 170 Tunney's Pasture Driveway
Ottawa, Ontario K1A 0T6



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Facts on Hearing Limitations

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by Shannon Brennan, Irene Gombac, Melissa Sleightholm

The Participation and Activity Limitation Survey (PALS) is a national survey funded by Human Resources and Social Development Canada (HRSDC) and conducted by Statistics Canada designed to collect information on adults and children who have an activity limitation, that is, whose everyday activities are limited because of a condition or health problem.

The following fact sheet is a profile of Canadians 15 years of age and older who reported having a hearing limitation. It is important to note that this includes people who are completely deaf, deafened¹, hard of hearing or have some hearing loss. This fact sheet examines the areas of education, employment, computer usage, and aids and assistive devices, for those with a hearing limitation.

It should also be noted that while the main focus of this fact sheet is on people with hearing limitations, the majority of the population with a hearing limitation has at least one other limitation. This should be considered when interpreting the results since the effects of the hearing condition alone cannot be isolated.

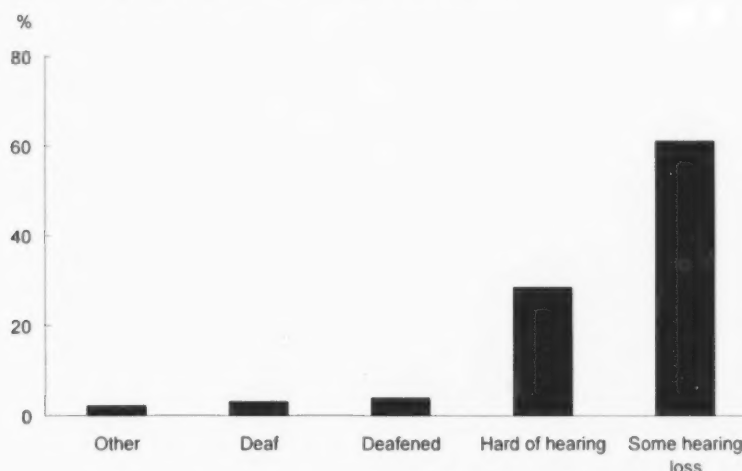
For more information, please refer to the Participation and Activity Limitation Survey 2006: Technical and Methodological Report (see 89-628-X 2007001).

Demographics

Most people reported mild hearing limitations

In 2006, 1,266,120 (5.0%) Canadians aged 15 and older reported having a hearing limitation. Over eight in ten (83.2%) hearing limitations were mild in nature, while the remaining 16.8% were classified as severe (for more information on severity and how it is derived please refer to the Participation and Activity Limitation Survey 2006: Technical and Methodological report 89-628-X). The majority of persons with a hearing difficulty described themselves as having some hearing loss (60.8%; see chart 1).

Chart 1
Proportion of people by type of hearing limitation, 2006



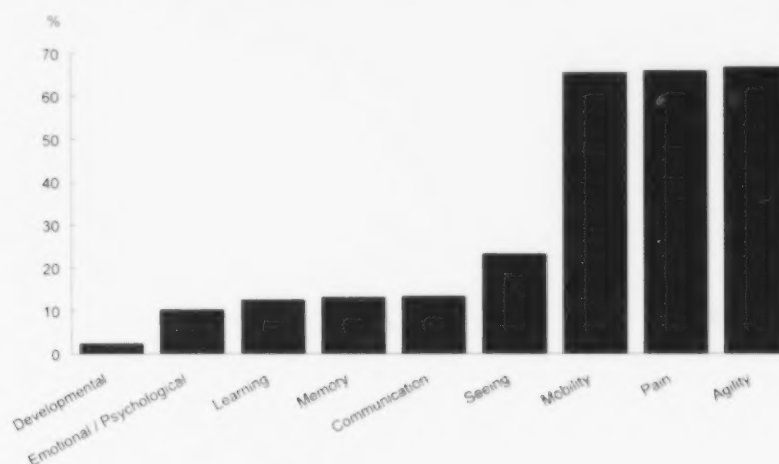
Source: Statistics Canada, Participation and Activity Limitation Survey, 2006.

1. Deaf refers to people who were born deaf and deafened refers to people who became deaf at some point after birth.

Mobility, agility, and pain conditions often occur with hearing limitations

Of all the people who indicated that they had a hearing limitation, 13.0% (164,540) stated that it was their only difficulty, while the remaining 87.0% indicated that they had a hearing condition and one or more additional limitations. Problems with mobility, agility and pain were the most commonly reported difficulties (see chart 2).

Chart 2
Common limitations paired with hearing conditions, 2006



Source: Statistics Canada, Participation and Activity Limitation Survey, 2006

Likelihood of hearing limitation increases with age

Rates of hearing limitations were fairly low among young adults. Beginning at ages 35 to 44 the prevalence grew steadily, with the highest rate being reported by those aged 75 years and older (25.9%; see table 1).

Table 1
Hearing limitation rates by age, 2006

Age group	Total Canadian population	Population with hearing limitations	Hearing limitation rate
	counts		percent
Total - aged 15 and over	25,422,280	1,266,120	5.0
15 to 24	4,147,070	21,810	0.5
25 to 34	3,942,260	27,070	0.7
35 to 44	4,747,620	71,800	1.5
45 to 54	4,912,800	179,020	3.6
55 to 64	3,623,390	231,130	6.4
65 to 74	2,239,630	265,740	11.9
75 and over	1,809,500	469,560	25.9

Source: Statistics Canada, Participation and Activity Limitation Survey, 2006

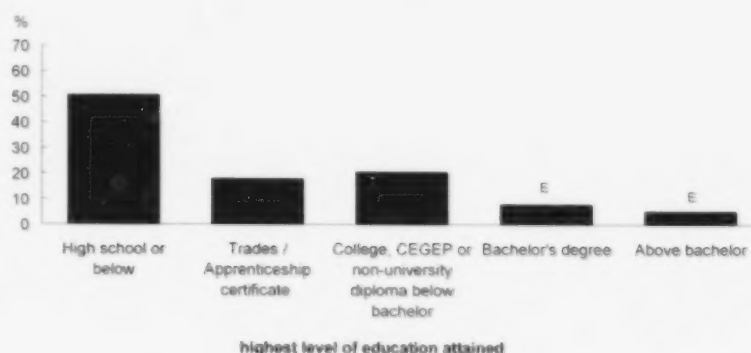
Education

In 2006, 4.3% (22,740) of people aged 15 to 64 with a hearing limitation attended school, with over six in ten (67.2%) attending on a full-time basis. Of the 22,740 in school in April 2006, over half (53.0%) were between the ages of 15 and 24.

Highest level of educational attainment

In 2006, over half (50.2%) of people with a hearing condition said their highest level of educational attainment was high school or below. The remaining half indicated various levels of attainment, with 20.1% having attained a college degree or diploma below a bachelor's degree, 17.5% a trade or apprentice certificate, and 7.5% a Bachelor's degree (see chart 3).

Chart 3
Highest level of educational attainment, 2006



Condition impacts education choices

Source: Statistics Canada, Participation and Activity Limitation Survey, 2006.

Having a hearing limitation can affect one's education in many ways. Of the people who had their hearing limitation before completing all of their formal education, nearly four in ten (39.8%) reported that their condition influenced their choice of courses or careers, while over one in four (28.2%) stated that they returned to school for retraining. Other common effects included increased length to complete education, and having to take fewer classes (see table 2).

Table 2
Effects of a hearing limitation on education, people aged 15 to 64, 2006

Impact on Education	%
Choice of courses influenced	39.8
Went back to school for retraining	28.2
Took longer to achieve education	24.9
Took fewer classes	22.1
Education interrupted for long periods of time	17.8
Changed course of studies	17.8
Attended special education school or classes	15.3
Additional schooling expenses	12.5
Changed schools	12.6

Source: Statistics Canada, Participation and Activity Limitation Survey, 2006.

^E use with caution

In addition, one in five (20.3%) people with a hearing condition said that they had discontinued their formal education as a result of their condition. People with severe hearing limitations were more than twice as likely as those with mild hearing limitations to say that they had withdrawn from formal education (43.5^E% versus 16.8%).

Employment

In 2006, of those people with hearing limitations between the ages of 15 to 64, 47.3% reported being employed, 23.4% reported that they were not in the labour force, while 5.1^E% reported that they were unemployed. Almost one-quarter (23.3%) of people aged 15 to 64 with a hearing limitation reported that they were retired.

Employed

Condition limits amount of work

Close to one-third (33.2%) of employed people with a hearing difficulty said their condition limited the amount or kind of work they could perform, and many indicated that they required job modifications to be able to work. These modifications included customizing or reducing work hours (12.1%), and job redesigns (10.6%). Of the people who indicated these needs, modified hours were made available in 74.0 % of cases, and job redesigns in 53.4% of cases.

Difficulty in advancement related to limitation

Almost one-third (32.3%) of people with a hearing limitation who were employed reported that they believed their condition made it difficult for them to advance or change jobs. People with severe hearing limitations were twice as likely to report difficulty as were people with mild hearing limitations (63.0% versus 29.6%). Regardless of severity, more than one in five (22.3%) attributed their difficulty with advancement to being limited in the number of hours they could work.

Discrimination in the workplace

In addition to difficulty with advancement, a small proportion of people with hearing limitations who were employed reported experiencing discrimination in the workplace. In 2006, 6.5^E% of people with a hearing condition indicated that within the previous five years they believe they were refused a job, while an additional 3.0% reported believing they were refused a promotion because of their condition.

Unemployed

Unemployed more likely to be limited in amount of work

In 2006, approximately 25,800 people (5.1^E%) with hearing limitations aged 15 to 64 reported that they were unemployed, representing an unemployment rate of 10.4%. Of this group, over half (50.8^E%) indicated that their condition affected their ability to look for work. In addition, people who were unemployed were significantly more likely to report that they were limited in the amount or kind of work that they could do (70.0%) compared to those who were employed (33.2%).

Almost half of unemployed reported previous employer not aware of limitation

People who were unemployed were more than twice as likely as those who were working to report that their employer was not aware of their hearing condition. Almost one-half (46.1^E%) of people who were unemployed stated that their previous employer was not aware of their hearing limitation, whereas 22.4% of people who were employed said that their current employer was not aware of their hearing condition.

^E use with caution

Not in the labour force

Over half of people not in the labour force were completely prevented from working

Approximately 118,900 (23.4%) of people with a hearing limitation aged 15 to 64 were not participating in the labour force in 2006. Of these people, over half (62.5%) reported that they were completely prevented from working, while 29.0%^E stated that their condition affected their ability to look for work. In addition, 62.0% indicated that their condition limited the amount of work they would be able to do at a job or a business.

Close to four in ten retirements were not voluntary

Over 118,500 people (23.3%) with a hearing limitation aged 15 to 64 indicated that they were retired in 2006. Of this group, almost four in ten (39.7%) said that their retirement had not been voluntary. Further, over half (51.3%) stated that they were completely prevented from working as a result of their condition.

Volunteer work

One-third of people volunteered

In 2006, over one-third (37.3%) of people with a hearing limitation aged 15 to 64 participated in unpaid volunteer activities. Employed persons were more likely to participate (43.8%) as were people who were not in the labour force (20.5%).

Aids and assistive devices

People with a severe hearing limitation were more likely to use assistive technology

Overall, 19.0% of people with a hearing condition used an aid or assistive device. People with severe hearing limitations were twice as likely to use aids or specialized equipment (32.4%) than were people with mild hearing limitations (16.3%).

Hearing aids was the most commonly used assistive device

The most commonly used assistive devices for people with a hearing limitation were hearing aids (79.7%) and volume control telephones (35.5%). Also common were computers to communicate (13.1%), closed caption televisions or decoders (10.3%), and visual or vibrating alarms (6.7%; see table 3).

Table 3
Aids and assistive devices used by people with a hearing limitation, 2006

Aid/assistive device	%
Hearing aids	79.7
Volume control telephone	35.5
Computer to communicate	13.1
Closed caption TV or decoder	10.3
Visual or vibrating alarm	6.7
Amplifiers	5.7
Other phone related devices	5.7

Source: Statistics Canada, Participation and Activity Limitation Survey, 2006

^E use with caution

People with severe hearing limitations more likely to lip read or use sign language

People with a severe hearing limitation were more likely to speech read or lip read (41.6%) compared to people with a mild hearing limitation (26.1%). American Sign Language (ASL) was the most commonly used form of sign language, reported by 49.8% of those using sign language.

Internet

Internet influences communication and quality of life

Overall 68.6% of people with a hearing limitation used the Internet in the twelve months prior to the survey. Of those who had used the Internet, 43.2% reported that the Internet had increased their ability to reach out to people who have similar interests and/or experiences, and 59.6% said that it had improved their quality of life.

This fact sheet has highlighted key findings from the 2006 Participation and Activity Limitation Survey pertaining to hearing limitations. For more information on this topic and other publications from the 2006 Participation and Activity Limitation Survey please consult <http://www.statcan.gc.ca/bsolc/olc-cel/olc-cel?catno=89-628-X&chropt=1&lang=eng>.

How to obtain more information

Specific inquiries about this product and related statistics or services should be directed to: Social and Aboriginal Statistics Division, Statistics Canada, Ottawa, Ontario, K1A 0T6 by telephone: 613-951-5979 or by e-mail at sasd-dssea@statcan.gc.ca.

Statistics Canada National Contact Centre

Toll-free telephone (Canada and the United States):
Inquiries line 1-800-263-1136

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